

Introduction

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, is also called Yom HaDin, the Day of Judgment. Traditionally, this is the day when God decides who should be written into the Book of Life. It is therefore customary to greet each other saying: "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year."

The following text is from the Kitzur Shulhan Arukh which was composed in Uzhgorod (c.1844–c.1864) by Shlomo Ganzfried. The Kitzur Shulhan Arukh is a summary of the Shulhan Arukh of Joseph Karo and states clearly what is permitted and what is forbidden, emphasizing the customs of the Jews of Hungary at that time.

Kitzur Shulchan Arukh 129:8

After the maariv service on the first night of Rosh Hashanah, it is customary for people to wish each other eshanah tova tikatev vetichatem (May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year) and to a woman tikateivi vetichatemi. But you do not extend these wishes in the daytime because the writing has been finished before midday...

קיצור שלחן ערוך קב"ט:ח'

לאחר גמר תפלת מעריב בליל ראשון נוהגין לומר כל אחד לחברו לשנה טובה תכתב ותחתם. ולנקבה אומרים, תכתבי ותחתמי, אבל ביום אין אומרים. לפי שכבר נגמרה הכתיבה קודם חצות היום...

1. Why is the greeting said during the day?
2. How do you think people expressed their good wishes to people who were not living nearby and who they did not meet face-to-face?

Shana Tova Greetings in Primary Sources

Below are examples of Shana Tova cards from the collection of the National Library of Israel.

1. Examine the pictures.
2. What is the subject of the illustration?
3. What is the connection to Rosh Hashanah in your opinion?
4. Do you like the card?
5. Would you send the card?
6. After examining the cards, sort them into categories.
 - What do they have in common?
 - How many ways can you categorize them?

Sending Shana Tova Greetings

הספרייה הלאומית
المكتبة الوطنية الإسرائيلية
The National Library of Israel



Soldiers and Theodore Herzl, Israel, 1950
The Ephemera Collection, The National Library of Israel



Shana Tova, Israel, 1958
The Ephemera Collection, The National Library of Israel



Shana Tova – Galilee, 1960s
The Ephemera Collection, The National Library of Israel

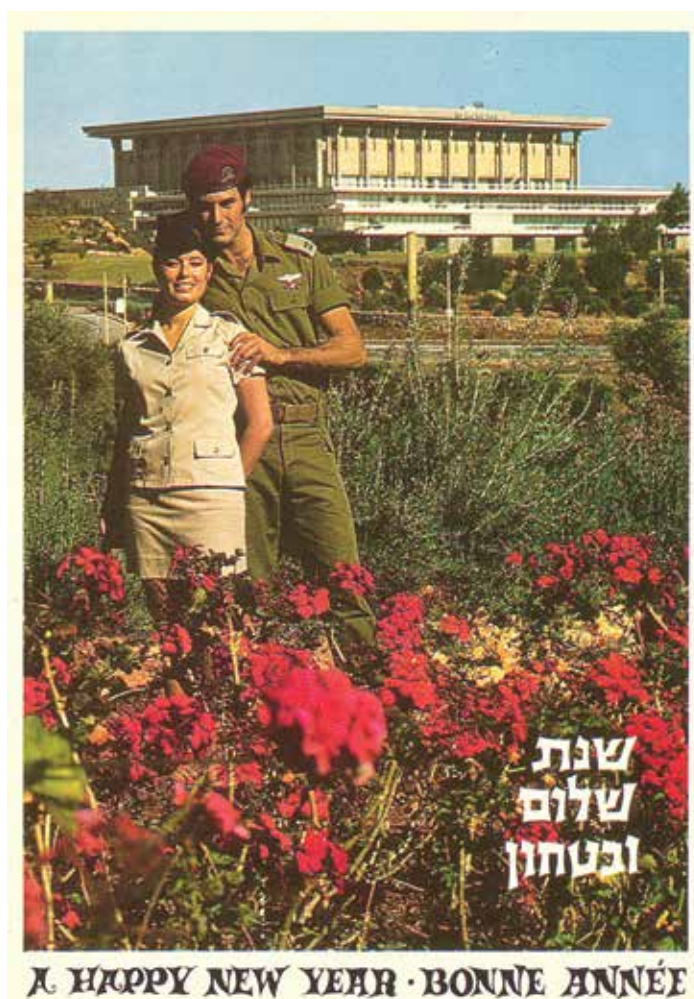


Shana Tova, Israel, 1958
The Ephemera Collection

Sending Shana Tova Greetings



Immigration to America, Early 1900s
Joseph and Margit Hoffman Judaica Postcard Collection
The National Library of Israel



Shana Tova Card, Knesset, Jerusalem, 1970s
Joseph and Margit Hoffman Judaica Postcard Collection
The National Library of Israel



Shana Tova Card, Herzl, 1910
Joseph and Margit Hoffman Judaica Postcard Collection
The National Library of Israel

Wrapping It Up!

1. Are Shana Tova cards commonly sent today?
2. What other media are used to wish friends and family a shana tova?
3. How do you think Rosh Hashanah wishes will be sent in the future?